



## Save a child with **AMBER ALERT**

A parent's worst nightmare is a child abduction. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, 74 percent of children who were abducted and later found murdered were killed within three hours of being taken. Quick response is vital.

### What is **AMBER ALERT**?

**AMBER ALERT** empowers law enforcement, the media and the public to combat an abduction by sending out immediate, up-to-date information that aids in the child's safe recovery.



The **AMBER ALERT** Program has helped in successfully recovering over two hundred and fifty children since it was established statewide in California on July 31, 2002.

### **AMBER ALERT Guidelines**

- **AMBER ALERT** may be activated only by law enforcement agencies.
- **AMBER ALERT** is intended only for the most serious, time-critical child abduction cases.
- **AMBER ALERT** is not intended for cases involving runaways or parental abductions, except in life-threatening situations.

### **Criteria for activating an AMBER ALERT**

Law enforcement agencies ensure these conditions are met before activating an **AMBER ALERT**:

- The investigating law enforcement agency confirms an abduction has occurred or the child was taken by anyone, including but not limited to a parent or guardian.
- The victim is 17 years of age or younger, or has a proven mental or physical disability.
- The victim is in imminent danger of serious injury or death.
- There is information available that, if provided to the public, could assist in the child's safe recovery.

### **History AMBER ALERT**

The **AMBER Alert** Program originated in Texas in 1996 after 9-year-old Amber Hagerman was abducted and murdered. Texas organized a system that encouraged law enforcement agencies to alert the media following confirmed child abduction.

California introduced the **AMBER Alert** concept in 1999 as a regional program. In 2002 it was adopted statewide after legislation established procedures to assist law enforcement.

### **California Highway Patrol's Role in AMBER ALERT:**

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) is responsible for statewide coordination of **AMBER ALERT** and the other emergency response activities associated with a child abduction.

The CHP is ready to assist in the recovery of an abducted child with statewide notifications of child abduction information.

In this role, the CHP provides law enforcement agencies with assistance in the following areas:



**Emergency Alert System** Legislation defines a true **AMBER ALERT** as the activation of the Emergency Alert System (EAS). The EAS message pre-empts radio and television broadcasts and provides information to the public immediately. To attract attention, the messages are preceded and concluded with alert tones.

**Changeable Message Signs** Activation of electronic changeable message signs operated by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) give real-time information to motorists. As part of the **AMBER ALERT** system, these signs can transmit information about a confirmed child abduction case. The signs will only be activated for an incident which meets the **AMBER ALERT** criteria. When local law enforcement agencies want message sign activation, the CHP will be the point of contact.

**APBNet Flyers** This is an web-based system that captures and immediately distributes color photographs and images to law enforcement agencies, media outlets, and other organizations. In addition, the system is capable of transmitting information via facsimile to businesses, hospitals, schools, media outlets and agencies.

**The CHP Web Site** When the CHP receives word of a confirmed child abduction which meets the **AMBER ALERT** criteria, it can post APBNet flyers, photographs and other pertinent information on the department's Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD)/media Web site ([cad.chp.ca.gov](http://cad.chp.ca.gov)) and public Web site ([www.chp.ca.gov](http://www.chp.ca.gov)).

**Emergency Digital Information Service (EDIS)** EDIS delivers official information about emergencies and disasters to law enforcement, news media and the public in California. Electronic emergency bulletins posted to EDIS are available by e-mail and pager from various providers, who voluntarily provide this service. Bulletins are posted on the EDIS Web site ([www.edis.oes.ca.gov](http://www.edis.oes.ca.gov)) for access by the media, law enforcement agencies and the public.

**Wireless Emergency Alerts Program** The Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) Program allows consumers with a WEA-capable smartphone and feature phones to automatically receive free **AMBER ALERT** messages, along with Presidential and Imminent Threat Alerts. When a subscriber with a WEA enabled cellular phone is within range of the activated cell tower they will receive the **AMBER ALERTS**, even if the wireless customer is not from the area. The program is an "opt out" program, meaning subscribers do not have to enroll in the program to receive alerts. The WEA **AMBER ALERT** notification is automatically sent from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at the time of the **AMBER ALERT** activation. The message includes an audible tone followed by a text-like message.

## What can the public do to help?

If you witness a child abduction, contact your local law enforcement agency or call 911 immediately! Provide information on the location of the abduction and a description of the victim, the suspect and/or any vehicle involved.

If you hear an AMBER ALERT, watch for the child, suspect and vehicle described in the alert. Immediately report any sightings by calling 911 or the telephone number included with the alert. (Do not call 911 to request information about the abduction.)



## What parents can do to educate their children

Teach your child these safety tips:

Never get into anyone's car without your parents' permission.

Move away from a car that pulls up beside you if you don't know the driver.

Say, "No, thank you," if a stranger or someone else offers you candy or gifts.

Never answer the door if you are home alone.

Don't play in deserted buildings.

## For more information:

**California Highway Patrol** 1-800-TELL-CHP (1-800-835-5247) [www.chp.ca.gov](http://www.chp.ca.gov)

**California Department of Justice** [www.ag.ca.gov](http://www.ag.ca.gov)

**Missing and Unidentified Persons Unit** [www.ag.ca.gov/missing](http://www.ag.ca.gov/missing)

**Missing Children Hotline** 1-800-222-FIND (1-800-222-3463)

**Office of Victim Services** (877) 433-9069

**Crime and Violence Prevention Center** [safestate.org](http://safestate.org)

**National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMC)** 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)  
[www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)

